

EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR ANKLE STRENGTH AND BALANCE

Why do we want to improve ankle strength and balance?

By improving your ankle strength and balance not only will you reduce your chances of ankle injury but you will prevent future hip and knee problems. It will also assist in improving your agility in sport and daily functioning.

The exercises:

1. ABC's

In sitting or lying use your ankle to write the ABC's make sure to write each letter correctly and use your whole ankle not just the toes.

2. Stand on one leg with your eyes open

Too easy? Try doing the same exercise with your eyes closed or stand on a foam mat or wobble board.

3. Stand on both legs and rise up onto your toes

Too easy? Try doing the same exercise with your eyes closed or stand on a foam mat or a wobble board.

4. Stand on one leg and rise up onto your toes

Too easy? Try doing the same exercise standing on a step or a ledge with your heel over the edge and rise up onto your toes.

5. Mini squats

Make sure your knees face directly over your big toes

Too easy? Try doing the same exercise with your eyes closed or stand on a foam mat or wobble board.

6. Hip swings

Standing on one leg, swing the other leg forwards and backwards and out to the side and back across the body. Make sure you swing from the hip and not the back.

Too easy? Try doing the same exercise with your eyes closed or stand on a foam mat or wobble board.

7. Walking on your heels

Try walking in a straight line on your heels with your toes up

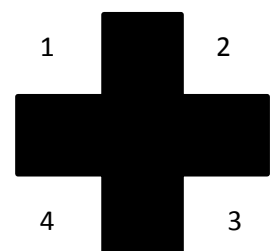
8. Figure of 8 running

Run along a flat surface in a figure of 8 shape

9. Jumping

Make a cross on the ground using two pieces of tape. Label each square 1-4 (see below). Place both feet in the square labelled 1 and jump into the 2nd square. Then go from square 2 to 3 and then 3 to 4 and then back to 1.

Too easy? Do the same this time hopping on one leg



Stretches

- To be done after the above exercises
- Hold each stretch for 20 seconds and repeat 3 times (do not bounce)

1. Gastrocnemius stretch:

Lean against a wall with the leg you wanting to stretch out behind you. Keep that knee locked and the heel touching the ground. Lean forward until you feel a stretch along your calf (you may have to move the foot closer to the wall or further back in order to feel the stretch)

[Picture]

2. Soleus stretch: (for the deep calf muscle)

Lean against a wall with the leg you want to stretch out behind you. Bend the knee at the back and keep the heel in contact with the ground. Lean forward until you feel a stretch along your calf. (You may have to move the foot closer to the wall or further back in order to feel the stretch)

[Picture]

3. Tibialis anterior stretch: (shin)

Sit on the sole of one foot with the opposite buttock. Clasp around your knee, bringing it towards your chest until the stretch is felt along the front aspect of the lower leg

[Picture]

Why not try and add the above ankle strengthening programme into your weekly gym routine.